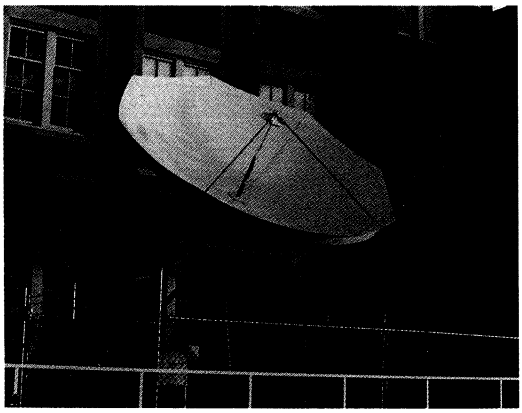
Satellite Videoconferences

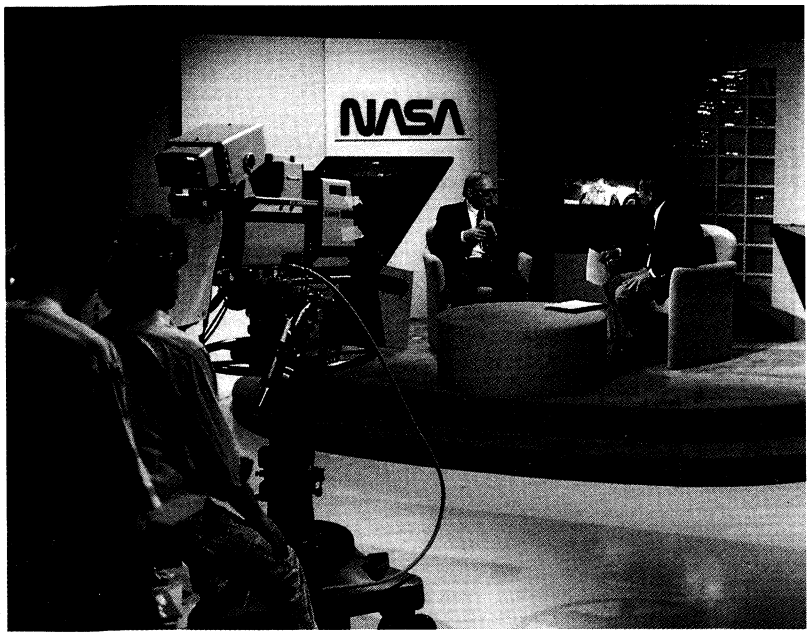
By means of live, educational satellite videoconferences, NASA is helping thousands of teachers to learn more about aerospace matters, improve their classroom skills, and expand significantly the content of their aerospace education curricula.

The 1 1/2 hour "Update for Teachers" programs originate at Oklahoma State University (OSU) Telecommunications Center. The television signals are transmitted to the WESTAR IV geostationary communications satellite, which retransmits them to hundreds of schools across the U.S. and in parts of Mexico and Canada. Participating schools are equipped with small, home-style satellite reception dishes.

Education Satellite Videoconference programs are conducted four times yearly. Examples of subject matter include astronauts describing training activities, engineers and systems planners demonstrating spacesuits and space foods, tours of the Space Station *Freedom* mockup, the various processing steps required to prepare the Space Shuttle for launch, aerodynamic design computation by supercomputer, and educational technology aids. The first program of 1990 was devoted to a tomato seed growth in space project; the second highlighted advances in space robotics and the planned use of robots to do jobs that are impractical, too dangerous or too difficult for humans.



Relatively inexpensive satellite reception dishes, like this one at a Stillwater (Oklahoma) elementary school, allow videoconference participation by hundreds of schools in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.



NASA's Education Satellite Videoconference series updates thousands of teachers on NASA activities and broadens the content of the nation's aerospace education programs. In photo, series host Bill Nixon of the NASA Educational Affairs Division interviews education specialist Norman Poff.

After the speakers' presentations, teachers are invited to telephone toll-free and ask questions. Participants are told about available NASA educational resources and how to obtain them, then aerospace education specialists conclude the conferences with practical, hands-on sessions that illustrate methods for teaching aerospace concepts in the classroom. The combination of live presentations and interactive telephone participation make the videoconferences useful and dynamic tools for the development of professional educators.

The series is produced for NASA's Educational Affairs Division by the NASA Educational Technology Branch and the Aerospace Education Services Project, OSU, with the assistance of the OSU Educational Television Service.